

# America's One-Stop Career Center System *April 1997*

## One-Stop Shopping for Tomorrow's Jobs

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Good employment opportunities have never been more abundant, but never before has the job market been such a complex, even bewildering, environment to master. That's why having a range of job, training and career services in one place is essential.

Not so long ago, if you were laid off, you'd go to the unemployment office and, maybe, make another stop at an employment service.

In today's competitive, rapidly changing global economy, if you're looking for a new or better job, you may need not only good job listings and short-term unemployment benefits, but customer-friendly career counseling, training to learn new skills, and high-quality, consumer information on what jobs, industries, and areas are hot, and what are the most appropriate training and other service providers. And, if you are an employer seeking workers with specific skills to grow your business, it certainly helps to have one place where you can list jobs and scan literally millions of resumes.

The One-Stop Career Center system, which serves these very purposes, is one of the most important Department initiatives. Three years after the Federal investment in this bipartisan partnership with states and localities began, we have just announced funding that will double the number of One-Stop states to 33 by July. We hope to add six to 12 additional states during 1997.

If One-Stops do nothing else than ease the trials and traumas of finding a job, they are a big success. But, as the hub of this country's new workforce development system, they do so much more.

Consider Deborah Amaro. A mother of two, she had been out of the work force for nine years, but needed to quickly find a job. She came to the Gulf Coast Careers - Conroe Center in Texas, where a job-search workshop helped her to hone her interviewing and networking skills. A former secretary, she urgently needed to bring her skills into the Information Age. Through this One-Stop Center, she was referred to a computer training school. While she was learning software systems, she used the center to write and fax letters and updated resumes. Thanks to her persistence and the various One-Stop services, within two months, she found a full-time job to support her family.

Or Michael Verrengia. The technology director of a large New England insurance company, when he was downsized after 26 years with the company, he didn't know where to turn. Until he arrived at Connecticut Works-Enfield this year. He mentioned "three key factors of One-Stop service" that helped him find a new job: training for the job search, computer and telephone services, and "supportive, helpful and cheerful" staff who "recognize the stress" that job seekers undergo.

Most people - on both sides of the political aisle and both sides of the hiring desk - agree that a good workforce development system should consolidate programs and the delivery of services. It also should introduce market mechanisms if possible, enhance local flexibility, focus on transitions from school to work, and increase private sector involvement. One-Stop Centers are the centerpiece, because they bundle together services and information, and do away with the old, confusing patchwork of employment and training programs.